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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002839

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [OSCE](#)

SUBJECT: SE TURKEY: DSM EXPERIMENT DRAGS ON

REF: A. ANKARA 2525

[1](#)B. 04 ANKARA 6994

[1](#)C. 04 ADANA 0147

Classified By: Political Counselor John W. Kunstadter for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

THIS CABLE IS FROM AMCONSUL ADANA.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: DEHAP leaders have yet to realize their hopes of creating a new, national-level, moderate political party from the Democratic Society Movement (DSM) announced last fall. One observer attributes the delay to both the PKK,s popularity and pro-Kurdish politicians, need to recalculate based on the ECHR,s May 12 ruling on Abdullah Ocalan,s 1999 trial. Many contacts claim any &new8 party would just be DEHAP by a different name. The Acting Mayor of Diyarbakir, however, claims that precinct-level elections for the new entity will be held within two weeks. Meanwhile, the Diyarbakir Governor continues to build dialogue with civil society, while lamenting the lack of a common GoT policy in the region. In the current polarized political climate, exacerbated by violent clashes and the ECHR ruling, it is unlikely that a DEHAP facelift can have a meaningful impact in the short term. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Late last year leaders of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Peoples, Party (DEHAP) told emboff they were planning the formation of a new party that they hoped would be legally established by April 2005 (Ref A). The new political initiative, referred to as the Democratic Society Movement (DSM), was initially announced in October by the four Kurdish former DEP MP,s (including Leyla Zana), and was later endorsed by DEHAP leadership. Despite the desired timetable laid out last year, the new party has yet to materialize.

Why the Delay?

[1](#)3. (C) In response to queries about the delay in the development of the DSM, Hakkari human rights attorney Rojbin Tugan told consulate officers in a May 6 meeting that the emergence of any new, moderate political force is hampered by the PKK,s popularity (septel), and by voices in the government and State that label all discussions of the Kurdish problem as ultimately linked to the PKK agenda, and therefore terrorist-tainted. While former DEP deputies (and potential DSM leaders) Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle are still quite popular in the region, &their8 movement has not been able to come up with any fresh ideas, Tugan said.

[1](#)4. (C) Zana and Dicle lost some support last December, she added, when they signed on to a declaration by Kurdish intellectuals and then seemed to regret doing so, accusing the drafters of having amended the declaration after they had signed it. (Note: That declaration, entitled &What do the Kurds want in Turkey?8, was published in an advertisement in the International Herald Tribune on December 9, 2004. In it, signatories called for a new Turkish Constitution that recognizes the existence of Kurdish people, as well as for a general amnesty to establish a climate of reconciliation, and a program of economic development for southeast Turkey. According to Tugan, these views express what is in the hearts of &90 percent8 of the Kurds in the region. End note.)

[1](#)5. (C) Tugan noted that the delay in formally announcing the transformation of the DSM into a new party may also be partially attributable to the May 12 European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling on Abdullah Ocalan,s 1999 trial (Ref B). DSM leaders may have been waiting to see the reaction of all sides to such an announcement, Tugan explained, and preparing to tailor their response accordingly. (Note: The ECHR,s ruling was received with little reported or observed GoT-local populace confrontation on May 12, however the eventual GoT response to the ruling could yet provide a spark for nationalists of all stripes to react, per reftel B. End note.) She also hinted that the delay in announcing the party may be due to internal disputes as to who will be its leader.

We,re Working On It

[1](#)6. (C) Despite the delays, Acting Mayor of Diyarbakir Yusuf Akgun told PO on May 9 that plans for further DSM development were still rolling along, and that precinct elections for

local councils would take place within two weeks. &This will be an organization from the ground up,8 he said, explaining that the ward/precinct level councils would then elect town level bodies, leading to provincial and eventually national-level leadership decisions. In response to PO queries as to whether this was the beginning of a new party or a transformation of DEHAP that would feature the same personalities, Akgun would only responded that it all depended on the will of the people. &We can,t know because we haven,t had elections yet.8 He also noted that a GOT decision on whether or not DEHAP would be shut down would be instrumental in determining the future of DSM. (Note: In PO,s meeting with the DEHAP Acting Mayor, the only media representatives invited to cover the meeting were from Gun TV. End note.)

Been there, done that

17. (C) Several other contacts, including an advisor to the Mayor of Diyarbakir, the Diyarbakir Human Rights Association president and an independent businessman, said they saw the DSM going nowhere slowly. The DEHAP Mayor of Dogubeyazit, one of Turkey,s and DEHAP,s few female mayors, said the movement would simply be DEHAP by another name, and explicitly regional in character. Akgun remained on message, however, throughout his discussion with PO. Though he was unable to state clearly whether DSM would remain a movement or become a party, or whether it would replace or be a new version of DEHAP, Akgun averred that whatever it turned out being, it would be a national-level, not regional, entity, though it would strive to keep the Kurdish issue on the national agenda. (Note: This echoes language used by contacts last fall per Ref C. End note.) &We will cross bridges and reach out to others,8 he insisted, but did not provide specifics on how that would be achieved when specifically asked.

Diyarbakir Governor: Building Dialogue

17. (C) Separately, Diyarbakir Governor Efkana Ala told PO in a May 10 meeting that he was working hard to establish dialogue with different sectors of civil society. (Note: Non-governmental contacts, including the HRA Diyarbakir branch president told PO the Governor was experiencing some success in that regard and creating favorable impressions. End note.) Ala half-heartedly claimed the TRT Kurdish-language broadcasts were manifestations of increased language rights in Turkey, but he acknowledged that the GoT could do more in regard to mother tongue demands. He said that a &day when Kurds can see other languages than Turkish used in some courses in state schools and in private media would be a logical future development.8 He seemed unsure whether he could predict use of Kurdish in future public political dialogue in Turkey when PO pursued the issue.

18. (C) He also seemed to indicate that the Ministry of Interior did not always see eye to eye with the Turkish military,s strategy in the region. &Not everyone sees things the same way,8 he said, lamenting the lack of an NSC-like national level process whereby common GoT policy could be forged. (Note: He expressed specific interest in the U.S. National Security Council approach and its mechanics. If Ala,s International Visitor program nomination is approved, this may be considered in terms of program suggestions. End note.) Ala accepts the notion that both the GoT and the PKK have contributed to a &with us or against us8 situation in which there is little space for any independent political expression in the region.

19. (C) Comment: The already polarized political climate in southeast Turkey is being exacerbated by ongoing clashes between the PKK and security forces, as well as by the May 12 ECHR ruling on Ocalan,s retrial. The ECHR ruling may be creating broad, non-elite expectations in the region, in light of the popularity that Ocalan continues to enjoy. There is potential for this development to be misinterpreted by his supporters in southeast Turkey, and subsequent disappointment about his non-release could be turn into something more, depending on GoT reaction to the ECHR ruling.

Under such conditions, it is unlikely, if not impossible, that DEHAP leaders, like Diyarbakir mayor Osman baydemir, and other pro-Kurdish politicians, such as Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, will have much success going the &moderate8 route and pushing a national-level party where the &Kurdish issue8 is but one agenda item. Unfortunately, a DEHAP facelift) the most likely outcome of the elections Akgun mentioned) will not have any meaningful impact on the political scene. In the meantime, public mood seems to be indicating growing desperation at the prospect of another summer regional conflict. End comment.

EDELMAN